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Detroit District

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# News Release

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## Partnership Agreement signed to restore the St. Louis River

**Detroit** — Officials at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, MPCA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, Corps, recently signed a half-million-dollar habitat restoration agreement benefiting the St. Louis River.

By signing the Partnership Agreement for Technical, Planning, and Engineering assistance between the Department of the Army and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Brad Moore, MPCA commissioner, and Lt. Col. William Leady, District Engineer for the Corps Detroit District, set in motion a three-year, multi-phased effort to assess contaminated sediments and restore habitat ecosystems in one of 43 identified Areas of Concern, AOC, in the Great Lakes.

These AOCs are severely degraded geographic areas within the Great Lakes Basin. The U.S. and Canada through the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978* defined these as “geographic areas that fail to meet the general or specific objectives of the agreement where such failure has caused or is likely to cause impairment of beneficial use of the area’s ability to support aquatic life.”

The agreement calls for the Corps to take sediment samples in the St. Louis Bay and Upper Harbor and provide technical, planning and engineering assistance to the MPCA. The agency will use the sampling results to prioritize strategies for implementing habitat restoration projects and delisting benefit use impairments in the AOC.

The Remedial Action Plan, RAP, began in 1989 as a collaborative effort between MPCA and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, WDNR. At that time, the agencies created a Citizens Advisory Committee, CAC. In 1997, with agency assistance, the CAC opened its doors as an independent nonprofit organization known as the St. Louis River Citizen’s Action Committee’s, SLRCAC. Many of the original citizens and agency partners are still active in the RAP and SLRCAC. In 2004 the SLRCAC proposed restoration goals for many of the impaired uses throughout the AOC. These restoration goals are an effort to delist nine Beneficial Use Impairments that affect the St. Louis River AOC.

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District civil works program encompasses 82,000 square miles of land inhabited by about 14 million people in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The Corps operates and/or maintains 94 harbors. Its mission includes real estate transactions, flood control, regulatory activities, disaster response, and mobilization readiness.

2-2-2 St. Louis River

The project cost is currently estimated at \$576,923. Two-thirds will come from the Corps' Great Lakes RAP program funds secured with the assistance of Congressman James Oberstar. The remainder will come from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency through cash contributions and in-kind services.

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